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First Group of Students Likes New U. S. Agency Tour

The seniors from Council Rocks High School, Newtown, Pa., go all out for the new "open house" program at Government agencies but—

The buts—and there are no ifs and ands about it—boil down to this: Keep the briefings short and sweet. And give us a chance to get in some questions.

What the seniors from Newtown think about the agency tours is important.

They took a trial run last week on the course set up by the Greater National Capital Committee, an affiliate of the Board of Trade.

Off to a late start, the pilot

program this year will go into full-scale operation next spring once the bugs are worked out in test runs.

For the seniors from Bucks County, the inside peek into Government was an eye-opener, and they are glad they did the trail blazing as the first group.

They learned a lot. They met some important people and they went back to their home town of 2100 to talk about what they saw and heard.

"It was much better to see the inside of buildings than just to pass outside on a bus," allowed Bob Caul, president of the class said. "But the talks could

have been shorter. They should give us a little bit of each instead of letting go with a full blast."

Bob got a "yea" vote from his classmates on that.

"After all, we have to get up early and go to bed late," said a pretty pony-tailed blond girl.

Even if the lectures got a bit on the long side, the Council Rocks High School class had no regrets for signing up as the first senior class to take the agency tour. All agreed it was worth the time to see how the pros in Government work.

In their 2½ days here, they squeezed in calls at three Gov-

ernment agencies—Agriculture, State Department, and Civil Service Commission.

These came in the midst of a busy scheduling of the standard tourist book attractions — the Washington Monument, White House, Supreme Court, National Gallery of Art, etc.

"After all, you must remember we are also here for fun," George Lindsay, the social science teacher, noted.

But the agency visits added a new dimension for learning to the tourist fun. Both Lindsay and Dominic Sagolla, principal, were amazed at the serious talk

they heard on buses and at the dining tables.

Among the tips the Newtown seniors left behind were these:

- It's important to have a top-flight official speak, if just for a few minutes. Then the seniors can go home and say they heard and saw a big name.
- Any talk longer than 10 minutes is too long and smacks too much of a classroom lecture.
- They would like a chance to ask questions.

Sagolla, who has been bringing senior classes here for the last ten years, plans to enroll for the agency tours again next

year. But he doesn't want the visits to take up too much time on a tight schedule.

"After all," he said, "kids go home and compare notes with other classes. If they didn't see everything, they become unhappy."

The Government "open houses" really hit home for some of the students. One, Robert Bishof, president of the student council, had almost switched careers from engineering to political science after hearing the State Department briefing.

"One more day of this, and I might have," Bob said.